

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 AID-05 ARA-06
TRSE-00 /099 W

-----070812Z 100552 /17

R 070800Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8522

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 00511

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MARR FR XY

SUBJECT: FRANCO-AFRICAN DAKAR CONFERENCE: COORDINATION
OF DEFENSE EFFORTS

REFS: A. STATE 002032 B. PARIS 37203 (1976)

1. WE HAVE HAD NO DETAILED CONVERSATION WITH FRENCH
OFFICIALS ON AFRICAN DEFENSE QUESTIONS SINCE MID-
DECEMBER DISCUSSION REPORTED REF B (BEING REPEATED
COTONOU AND NDJAMENA). HOWEVER, DURING JAN. 4
COURTESY CALL, NEW QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA
(FRANCOPHONE) CHRISTIAN DUTHEIL DE LA ROCHERE DID CON-
FIRM THAT MILITARY QUESTIONS WILL BE ON THE AGENDA FOR
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THE DAKAR FRANCO-AFRICAN CONFERENCE, ALTHOUGH HE
IMPLIED THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE A MAJOR ISSUE.
(INCIDENTALLY, PARIS EXPECTS ABOUT 20 NOT 30 CHIEFS OF
STATE OR GOVERNMENT TO ATTEND.)

2. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH QUAI OFFICIALS SINCE THE
ANGOLA CRISIS, WE HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THE RECURRING

THEME OF THE NECESSITY TO RESPOND TO THE MODERATE AFRICAN PERCEPTION OF HAVING BEEN "LET DOWN" BY THE WEST. HOUPHOUET AND SENGHOR ARE THE LEADERS MOST OFTEN CITED, BUT OTHERS LIKE KOUNTCHE, LAMIZANA AND EYADEMA ARE ALSO REPRESENTED AS HAVING URGED THE FRENCH TO DO SOMETHING TO PROTECT AFRICA AGAINST THE "RUSSO-CUBAN THREAT". MOST RECENTLY, THIS LINE WAS ECHOED TO US BY DE LA ROCHERE, ON THE BASIS OF BRIEFINGS FOR HIS NEW JOB.

3. THESE AFRICAN ATTITUDES HAVE REENFORCED THE QUAI'S ALREADY EXISTING CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET INROADS IN AFRICA AND THE CONSEQUENT THREAT TO FRENCH INTERESTS THERE. THE FRENCH RESPONSE TO AFRICAN APPROACHES HAS INCLUDED AGREEMENT DURING THE MAY 1976 FRANCOPHONE SUMMIT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE FRANCOPHONE SOLIDARITY FUND AND TO THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AND GISCARD'S PROPOSAL FOR A NEW AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND. CLOSER FRENCH CONSULTATION WITH THE BRITISH ON RHODESIA AND WITH THE U.S. ON ZAIRE ARE ALSO PART OF THE FRENCH REACTION.

4. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NEVER HEARD IT STATED, THE QUAI PROBABLY CONSIDERS THAT THE ANGOLAN EXPERIENCE HAS SOME POSITIVE ASPECTS. IT HAS CAUSED THE MODERATE AFRICANS OPENLY TO DECLARE THEIR FEARS AND THEIR NEED FOR WESTERN ASSISTANCE. MOREOVER, IT HAS ENCOURAGED SOME SO-CALLED PROGRESSIVES TO ASK THEMSELVES JUST WHAT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 00511

THEIR PRO-SOVIET STANCE HAS PRODUCED FOR THEM ECONOMICALLY AND TO QUESTION THE LONG-RUN WISDOM OF RELYING TOO HEAVILY ON A COUNTRY WHICH DOES NOT HESITATE TO DISPATCH A SMALL ALLY'S TROOPS TO FIGHT AFRICANS. GISCARD'S VISIT NEXT MONTH TO MALI IS PARTIALLY DESIGNED TO CAPITALIZE ON THIS LATTER PERCEPTION.

5. BEYOND REF B REPORT, WE HAVE LITTLE SOLID EVIDENCE OF CURRENT FRENCH ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEFENSE LINKS WITH THE FRANCOPHONE STATES AND AMONG THE AFRICANS THEMSELVES. WE BELIEVE THAT THE FRENCH, LIKE OURSELVES, OPPOSE AN ARMS RACE IN AFRICA. AS AN EXAMPLE, WE
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UNDERSTAND THAT RECENT REQUESTS FOR ARMS FOR IVORY COAST ARE BEING STUDIED WITH A JAUNDICED EYE DESPITE REPORTED IVORIAN WILLINGNESS TO PAY CASH. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FRENCH PROBABLY SEE INCREASED COOPERATION IN THE MILITARY SPHERE AMONG FRANCOPHONE STATES AS A POSITIVE ELEMENT, PROVIDED THAT IT DOES NOT RESULT IN CREATING A FEELING OF FURTHER ALIENATION AMONG THE PROGRESSIVES WITH A CONSEQUENT HARDENING OF THE MODERATE-RADICAL SPLIT WHICH WOULD GIVE THE SOVIETS A FURTHER OPENING.

6. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO SOUND OUT FRENCH ATTITUDES ON THESE MATTERS. FRENCH THINKING SHOULD BECOME CLEARER AS THE POLICY REVIEW NOW UNDER WAY TAKES SHAPE. MEANWHILE, THE USG MIGHT CONSIDER THE ADVISABILITY OF GETTING ITS OWN THOUGHTS ON DEFENSE QUESTIONS TO THE FRENCH, EITHER THROUGH THE EMBASSY OR SOME HIGH LEVEL MISSION, BEFORE THE FRENCH PLANNING EXERCISE IS

COMPLETED.

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